

## IMPLEMENTATION TEAM MEETING NOTES

July 10, 1997, 9:00 a.m.-4 p.m.

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE OFFICES  
PORTLAND, OREGON

### I. Greeting and Introductions.

The July 10 meeting of the Implementation Team, held at the National Marine Fisheries Service's offices in Portland, Oregon, was chaired by Brian Brown of NMFS. The agenda for the July 10 meeting and a list of attendees are attached as Enclosures A and B. The following is a distillation (not a verbatim transcript) of items discussed at the meeting, together with actions taken on those items. Please note that some enclosures referenced in the body of the text may be too lengthy to attach; all enclosures referenced are available upon request from NMFS's Kathy Ceballos at 503/230-5420 or via E-mail at [kathy.ceballos@noaa.gov](mailto:kathy.ceballos@noaa.gov).

Brown began the meeting by saying that, as announced at the last IT meeting, Donna Darm has been named the head of NMFS's Protected Resources Division for the Northwest Region, and will no longer be chairing the IT. I am now the director of NMFS's Northwest Region Hydropower Program, and will chair the Implementation Team, said Brown. Donna will still be involved with a variety of major protected species issues, but day-to-day oversight of the implementation process will no longer be a part of her duties.

### II. Updates.

A) In-Season Management; Fish Passage Center Access to Corps of Engineers Data. Michelle DeHart of the Fish Passage Center distributed Enclosure D, a memorandum updating the IT on the status of the 1997 migration (see Enclosure for details). Among her main points:

- ? According to the the final running average transportation proportion, in 1997, approximately 64% of the wild steelhead, 57% of the hatchery steelhead, 55% of the wild chinook and 50% of the hatchery chinook originating above Lower Granite Dam were transported during the spring migration season.
- ? Transportation of subyearling migrants is being maximized at all Snake River collector projects. Transportation is also being maximized at McNary Dam.
- ? Water temperatures to date have generally been cooler than the 10-year average.
- ? Flows and spill have decreased at all of the mainstem projects due to the completion of the spring melt. Total dissolved gas levels are now being managed to the water quality standards.
- ? Smolt Monitoring Program sampling for signs of gas bubble trauma in fish has ended for the season in the Snake River. Sampling continues at the Mid- and Lower Columbia River sampling sites. Signs of GBT have decreased substantially with the decrease in spill levels. Few sites are reporting any signs, and those that are reporting signs are well below the NMFS criteria.

Chris Ross of NMFS added that the sturgeon operation at Libby Dam will continue through July 11 this year. At that point, outflow from Libby will be ramped down gradually from 18 Kcfs to about 10 Kcfs, to allow the project to refill. When do you project refill at Libby? asked Ruff. By the first week of August, Arndt replied. Has the TMT discussed how far Libby, Hungry Horse and Grand Coulee will be drafted in 1997? asked Ruff. The Corps has been modeling some different scenarios, including one showing the full BiOp draft at those projects, as well as one showing what might be expected if we draft the projects as needed to maintain the summer flow target of 200 Kcfs at McNary, replied Ross. Under the latter scenario, Libby, Hungry Horse and Grand Coulee would all be drafted about 10 feet by August 31, somewhat less than the drafts called for in the BiOp. There has been no TMT decision to date, added Romeo Wisco of USBR, but the second scenario appears to be favored at this time. It is not an IT issue at this time. Has there been any TMT discussion of a Libby/Arrow swap in 1997? asked Brown. Not to date, Arndt replied, but I anticipate that there probably will be.

Moving on to the data access issue, Nigro said that there has been some recent changes in the availability of certain information that the Salmon Managers have traditionally received from the Corps via the Fish Passage Center. Specifically, over the past few years, the Corps has provided streamflow forecasts, upstream reservoir operations and SSARR runs for use by FPC, said DeHart. This year, the Corps has decided that it would provide that information only to the federal agencies, including NMFS, who gave us the option of obtaining this information through them.

This year, the Corps also told us that they would have to charge \$30 per hour to provide some of the other data we have traditionally received free of charge, in particular, water temperature data, DeHart continued. The other issue has to do with the decision the region made a couple of years ago to make all of this information available via the Internet. The problem with that is that it allows for unlimited dissemination of that information, and there are some in the Corps who are uncomfortable with that.

For the Fish Managers and other entities in the region to develop System Operational Requests, they need to have access to this information, DeHart continued. We've discussed this issue directly with the Corps and with the TMT, and we would like to come to an arrangement that works for everyone.

Arndt replied that, from the Corps' perspective, there are two main components to this issue. The first is public data availability -- Corps policy is that any data the Corps receives from public sources, such as temperature information, will be made available to anyone who requests it. If that's not happening, he said, let me know, and I'll make sure it is available at no cost.

However, if we are requested to massage, manipulate or reformat data we receive from another source, our preference would be for the requesting entity to do that work, Arndt continued. If you ask us to substantially customize data to fit your needs, then we're going to have to charge you. We're willing to do a reasonable amount of work free of charge, he said, but if the requested work is going to substantially impact Corps resources, then we're going to have to be compensated.

Basically, I guess what I'm saying to Michelle is, let's sit down and talk about this, and I'm sure we can work things out, said Arndt. If we don't have the resources to do some kind of detailed

manipulation of data, we'll let you know. It's more of a communications issue.

That covers data we obtain from other sources, said Arndt. The other, more problematic issue is the fact that a lot of flow and project operational data has been made available by the Corps in the past, through the CAFE system. One problem is that all of the federal agencies have gone away from the CAFE system, and are now disseminating information through the Internet. A tremendous amount of data is available via the Internet, which is as it should be -- it's public information, and should be available to anyone who wants it.

The problem is, Idaho Power, B.C. Hydro, the Mid-Columbia PUDs and Montana Power have all taken the position that they do not want their daily forecast information released to the public, Arndt continued. Not just via the Internet -- they're not willing to make that information available to the public, period. I expect the reason for that is the competitive nature of the power industry. In other words, this isn't the Corps' call -- it is the utilities who are insisting that their daily forecast data is proprietary. The exact information the utilities are asking the Corps to keep confidential is the daily project-specific data, historic and forecast, which is being stored in the CHROMES system, he added -- daily inflows, outflows and project elevations.

Weekly data, on the other hand, is less problematic, Arndt continued. The Corps has been doing weekly runs, and making those available to NMFS -- they can be made available to any of the TMT members. We can also make daily information available from the federal projects. In terms of daily information from projects operated by Idaho Power, B.C. Hydro, the Mid-Columbias and Montana Power, I'm afraid the only option I can suggest is for the Fish Managers to go directly to each of the four and make the case that they have a special need for this daily data, Arndt said. If they agree, the Corps certainly has no reason not to provide that data.

The IT discussed this issue for some minutes. In response to a question, Fuhrman said he wasn't sure precisely what concern was preventing Idaho Power's marketing staff from disseminating the requested information -- in fact, he said, it's possible that this is simply a misunderstanding. It was agreed that DeHart will put together a one page summary of their data needs (information sought, purpose, and protection) that are not being met and work with Doug Arndt, Dennis Rohr, and Roger Fuhrman to resolve the problem. They will report back to the IT at the September meeting.

B) Plan for Analyzing and Testing Hypotheses (PATH). No update was presented on this topic at today's meeting.

C) Integrated Scientific Advisory Board (ISAB). No update was presented on this topic at today's meeting.

D) Dissolved Gas Team (DGT). NMFS's Mark Schneider, chairman of the Dissolved Gas Team, distributed Enclosure C, the most recent DGT Plan of Action Drafting Outline, dated July 10, 1997, as well as the current timeline for the development of the DGT's Plan of Action:

GOAL.

Draft, review, public comment, edit, negotiate and adopt a plan of action to describe a long-term

action plan to reduce total dissolved gas created by voluntary and involuntary spill in the mainstem Columbia and Snake Rivers.

#### APRIL

- ? One-on-one discussions between Schneider and state DEQ or F&W representatives
- ? Meeting of DGT subcommittee, April 9, 1997 (signatories on final plan = COE, WDOE, ODEQ, IDEQ, Nez Perce, USFWS, EPA, USBR and NMFS. BPA?) Develop final outline of plan.
- ? Begin drafting text

#### MAY

- ? Drafting of Plan of Action
- ? DGT meeting to review draft

#### JUNE

- ? Redrafting of Plan of Action

#### JULY

- ? Final working draft of Plan of Action

#### AUGUST

- ? Individual agency reviews.

#### SEPTEMBER

- ? Presentation of final draft of the Plan of Action to the Implementation Team
- ? Public review process.

#### OCTOBER

#### NOVEMBER

- ? Final IT agreement on Plan of Action

#### DECEMBER

- ? Final Plan of Action signed.

#### JANUARY 1998

- ? Plan of Action applied to state dissolved gas waiver process.

The DGT has been busy this spring, said Schneider; our primary focus has been the development of the (above-described) Plan of Action. Other items we have been dealing with include a request from the Technical Management Team to evaluate the dissolved gas reduction potential of gas reduction measures in the 1997 Water Management Plan; we've also designated a DGT subcommittee to begin looking at a prioritization process for future dissolved gas research.

Overall, the Plan of Action development process is pretty much on schedule, although I think we'll be doing well to have a final working draft PoA by the end of this month, said Schneider. The state water quality agencies and EPA are very much interested in a longterm fix that will get the system in compliance with the 110% TDG standard; we've had a number of discussions with the Corps of Engineers about the direction of its Dissolved Gas Abatement Study in the context of that target, and I'm encouraged by the progress we're making there -- the Corps has been

responsive to the suggestions from the DGT membership. Because we're taking a systemwide approach to the dissolved gas problem, the Plan of Action will also encompass the Bureau of Reclamation, Mid-Columbia PUD and Idaho Power Company dissolved gas abatement programs, Schneider said. The bottom line is, it's coming together, but we still have a lot of work to do.

Has there been any discussion of a broader effort to revisit the dissolved gas standards? asked COE's Doug Arndt. Because it seems like we've gotten a lot of data on dissolved gas levels and their effects on aquatic organisms over the past two years, which have given us a somewhat different picture than the one we've gotten from the previous eight years' data -- perhaps it would be appropriate, at some point, to incorporate those data into our findings, and have a discussion about whether or not 110% is still the appropriate standard.

I don't know that we've had a specific discussion about updating the 110% standard, said EPA's Mary Lou Soscia, but the standards are updated by the states every three years. There may be some opportunity to address the Corps' concerns within that public process. At the DGT level, we have discussed the fact that the state standards are based upon information that was developed a number of years ago, and that that information was primarily laboratory-based, Schneider added.

What about EPA -- has there been any discussion within your agency about revisiting the 110% standard? asked Arndt. No, although the flexibility does exist to revisit the standard if compelling evidence is presented that such action is needed, replied Soscia. It's a possibility that we can discuss. Based on some of the criticism NMFS has received, and after reviewing the evidence to which Doug is referring, I think it would be a stretch to conclude that the 110% standard ought to be revisited based on that information, added Brown. I'm not trying to denigrate the DGT's efforts in any way, said Arndt -- I'm just thinking that that effort, plus the extensive gas monitoring and gas abatement research programs currently in place, might fit in with a more comprehensive process to examine what the appropriate water quality standard should be.

In response to a question from Brown, Schneider said that there has been some discussion of this issue at the DGT level; the state water quality agencies represented on the team have raised concerns about the fact that the 110% federal water quality standard is routinely exceeded during the course of normal FCRPS operations. However, the states recognize that, given high flows and the physical limitations of the current system, it simply isn't realistic to expect the system to meet the 110% standard during the peak flow season. However, a commitment to work toward meeting the 110% standard is one of the cornerstones of the PoA development process.

So the sense you're getting from the water quality agencies is that, although 110% TDG and 70 degrees in temperature are the federal standards, it's OK to violate those standards as long as you're committed to trying to meet them over the long term? asked one meeting participant. We have formed a temperature team, an offshoot of the System Configuration Team, chaired by Mary Lou, said NPPC's Jim Ruff. We've had several meetings to date, and are actively addressing the temperature issue, both what can be done in the near term and in the longer term. In response to the previous point, I don't think it's fair to say the water quality agencies don't care whether or not the federal standards are met, added ODFW's Tony Nigro -- they're saying that they recognize that an effort is underway to get the system into compliance with the standards,

but it's not acceptable that the standards are not being met. EPA's goal is to meet the law, said Soscia.

Is it possible that the temperature group could take a similar approach to the one the Dissolved Gas Team is currently embarked on, the development of a plan of action to bring the system into compliance over the long term, including specific actions that will be taken, both near-term and long-term, to alleviate the temperature problem? asked Brown. We have had some discussions along those lines, replied Soscia -- to date, we've been discussing temperature abatement alternatives and compiling a database, in preparation for a workshop scheduled later this fall. Perhaps it's time to look into the development of a more formal plan of action, she said.

The bottom line of the DGT's effort, just to make sure everyone understands the goal, is to get an agreement in place to streamline the state TDG waiver process to implement the Biological Opinion spill program, said Brown. In doing so, we're also trying to get at the principal issue, which is gas abatement measures. The only thing I would add is that the dissolved gas Plan of Action will eventually wind up on the IT's table, said Schneider, and the IT membership will have an opportunity for detailed review and comment before the agreement is signed.

E) System Configuration Team (SCT). Bill Hevlin of NMFS, the SCT co-chair, distributed a one-page summary of FY'98 project priorities developed at the last SCT meeting on June 16 (attached as Enclosure E). Primarily, I wanted to give you an update on where the System Configuration Team is currently focusing its efforts, Hevlin said, and to get any comments or suggestions the IT may have.

As most of you are aware, the Corps submitted a FY'98 Columbia River Fish Mitigation appropriations request to Congress in the amount of \$127 million, he continued. The preliminary feedback we're getting indicates that the actual amount we'll get from Congress for FY'98 may be closer to \$100 million. With that in mind, the SCT has been winnowing through the 48 projects included in the \$127 million request to identify items that can be deferred, items that can be pruned back somewhat or eliminated altogether, Hevlin said.

At the last SCT meeting in June, we went through the project list as a group and assigned each item an SCT priority -- high, medium or low, Hevlin said. The results of that process are summarized in Enclosure E. Basically, the high priority projects were items on which there was an SCT consensus to provide funding in FY'98 -- about \$86 million worth of projects in all. Medium-priority or "gray area" projects may or may not be funded in FY'98, depending on funding availability; \$37 million in projects were identified for medium-priority designation. In essence, the medium-priority items were the ones on which the SCT was unable to reach a prioritization consensus; we will revisit this list of projects if Congress appropriates more than \$86 million in FY'98, and prioritize this list of projects. The SCT was able to agree on only three projects, totaling about \$2.1 million, that were assigned low-priority, non-funded status.

I should note that several of the line-items in (Enclosure E) contain more than one component, Hevlin continued. At the next SCT meeting on July 21, the Corps will be providing detailed breakdowns of the various cost components contained in each of these measures, and there may be an opportunity to sharpen our pencils further, eliminating or deferring some project components without completely derailing the project itself.

Our understanding, from Sen. Gorton's staff, is that the Senate is in the process of marking up the \$127 million FY'98 CRFM appropriations request even as we speak, said Arndt -- the word we received was that the Senate is going to approve about \$117 million. It appears that the House appropriation, from what we've heard, will come in substantially lower, and we're expecting that some sort of compromise will be worked out between the lower amount from the House and the higher amount from the Senate, Arndt said.

The Corps has also put together a strawman proposal, to provide a starting point for discussions at the next SCT meeting, about where it may be possible to make some cuts within some of the individual medium-priority projects, such that we wind up closer to the \$100 million range in FY'98, Hevlin added. The idea behind this list is to take a more surgical approach, again, allowing some project elements to move forward rather than simply eliminating whole projects.

One thing I would point out is that, while Bill used the term "consensus," that consensus did not include the four Lower River Tribes and the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, said Brown. The three most expensive FY'98 items on the SCT's high-priority list -- the Lower Granite surface bypass program, John Day ESBS implementation and Bonneville PH2 DSM and outfall relocation -- are the ones that are of concern to the Tribes. In some cases, the Tribes see these as high-dollar investments in projects that are candidates for removal under the 1999 decision, he said; the Tribes are concerned that these additional investments will make the projects too expensive to remove, or that the use of these funds in this way will preclude other options down the road.

In an effort to get at some of the underlying policy issues inherent at these projects, at the request of the Natural Resources Defense Council, there was a meeting yesterday between the Salmon Caucus of the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority, NMFS, the Corps and some of the other interested parties in the region, Brown continued. There were several main issues addressed at the meeting, the first of which concerned the surface bypass program at Lower Granite.

As most of you are aware, he said, this is an investigation with prototype test, rather than the implementation of something that has already been investigated. NMFS stated in the Biological Opinion that surface bypass is a technology we would like to know more about before deciding on an appropriate long-term solution to passage problems on the Snake and Columbia Rivers. What we talked about yesterday is the fact that there are not, as yet, any specifically-identified criteria for the acceptance or rejection of that prototype, in terms of its performance in the 1998 test -- in other words, what criteria will be applied to the data generated by the test in order for us to decide where to go next.

I have asked Bill to bring this issue up at the next SCT meeting, and to begin the process of identifying some criteria associated with the evaluation of those results, Brown said. The answer to that question, at least from the standpoint of NMFS trying to make the 1999 decision, is wrapped up with what needs to be accomplished on a systemwide basis. The second outcome of yesterday's meeting was that we identified a need to focus greater attention, probably through the PATH process, on what kind of system survival we need in the basin to accomplish our respective goals of recovery, or the rebuilding of a sustainable fishery.

The third outcome of the meeting was that we need to develop some questions, through the Independent Science Advisory Board, on the assumption of benefits on which the federal and

state positions are based for these specific activities -- extended-length screens, and the refinement of the Bonneville bypass system, Brown continued. At the most recent meeting of this group in June, a paper was presented which attributed some fairly specific benefits to John Day extended-length screen implementation and Bonneville bypass improvements -- I believe that the paper projected a cumulative 10% improvement in survival through the implementation of those two projects.

So while these projects do represent a large portion of the FY'98 budget, there are significant survival benefits projected as a result of implementing these activities, Brown continued. One question that was suggested we pose to the ISAB was the soundness of those projections; the second question was the soundness of the conceptual framework on which that is based. ISAB has a lot on its plate at the moment, Brown said, but at the meeting, I agreed to continue discussions with Tony Nigro, Karen Garrison and Rob Lothrop, in an attempt to see if we can better define the questions for the ISAB. We will also involve Chip McConnaha and Mike Schiewe in those discussions.

Ruff said that, according to McConnaha, any such request for ISAB analysis needs to come through the Council, CBFWA or the IT; McConnaha also said not to expect an answer anytime soon. The bottom line from yesterday's meeting is that the federal parties will be taking the lead in the regional effort to develop decision criteria for Lower Granite, to frame the system survival issue, and to develop the questions for ISAB, said Nigro. I should add that, at the meeting, the four Treaty Tribes expressed their intention to engage in one-on-one consultations with the Corps on these three projects, and on the FY'98 program in general, he said.

Bear in mind that we are only planning to install five extended-length screens at John Day in 1998, before proceeding with the installation of screens on the rest of the units, said Hevlin. The 1998 program will include a detailed monitoring and evaluation effort, added Ruff; this will give us a pretty good idea of what the fish guidance efficiencies are for those screens over the entire season, for both spring and summer migrants, as well as fish condition and lamprey effects, which is one of the major Tribal concerns.

One other general point, said Ruff -- it seems to me that there is a general lack of knowledge in the region about the decision framework being developed to help us make the 1999 decision. Maybe the problem is a lack of communication, but it seemed to me that many of the parties at the table yesterday were unaware of the decision framework that's being developed through this group and PATH. Those parties need to be brought into that development process, he said.

One heads-up for the SCT members, said Nigro -- Bob Heinith told me after the meeting that he did not believe that the SCT had done a thorough and objective review of the technical analyses he provided them relative to CRITFC's proposals. Heinith said that he had provided 70 pages of technical support, and that the response from SCT had been somewhat superficial. I just wanted to note that that is a Tribal concern as well, said Nigro.

### III. Pacific Northwest Coordination Agreement (PNCA) Interim Report.

Romeo Wisco of the Bureau of Reclamation distributed a handout, titled "Report to IT on Evaluation of Impacts of New Schedule of Vernita Bar Flows," dated July 10, 1997. This document is attached as Enclosure F. Wisco spent a few minutes going through the contents of



this (self-explanatory) handout; he explained that, in response to a System Operational Request from the Salmon Managers laying out a new schedule of year-'round flows at Vernita Bar. Reclamation has held two meetings to date: one, on June 25, between Reclamation and all interested IT and TMT representatives, the other, on July 2, between the Reclamation Technical Group and the Salmon Managers. Enclosure F details the outcomes of those two meetings.

One thing that should be pointed out, said Wisco -- this is not a Pacific Northwest Coordination Agreement project, and the PNCA is not the forum that determines the operating procedures non- power requirements.

Wisco went through Enclosure F at some length, describing the tasks and studies assigned and specific scenarios Reclamation will be modelling (see Enclosure for details). In response to a question from Arndt, Wisco said the Colville Tribes had participated in the first meeting, but not the second. It strikes me that you may want to be looking at what might be broadly defined as biological impacts, particularly to resident fisheries, said Arndt.

The next work session is scheduled for July 23; the next full-group meeting to review the work products assigned during the first two meetings is scheduled for August 6. My goal for completing this task is August 30, Wisco added. In response to a request from Brown, Wisco agreed to provide a further update on this issue at the September IT meeting.

#### IV. ISRT Review of Corps Study Areas.

I've talked to a number of ISRT members, including Chip McConnaha, about the potential for the ISRT to review the Corps' research studies, as well as the studies under the direct fish and wildlife program, said Cooney. The ISRT is willing to take this task on, but they are very busy, and it will be at least a couple of weeks before they can make a start, said Cooney. I expect the group to get to this task some time late in July.

Brown asked about the background for this agenda item; Arndt explained that, while many of the Corps research studies are associated with construction activities and are coordinated through the SCT; there are a number of studies -- transport studies, avian predation studies and juvenile survival studies -- that don't really fit under the SCT's oversight umbrella. Until the ISRT was formed, there really wasn't a place above the AFEP technical process where those non-construction studies could be prioritized, or to which issues related to those studies could be elevated, Arndt said.

The ISRT was envisioned, by some of us, at least, as a kind of traffic cop, to help groups like IT sort through all of the proposed research going on throughout the system, and to make sure that key elements in each of the three research categories identified in the MYIP are being addressed, said Cooney. I think this is one example of how the ISRT might be used in that way.

#### V. Status of Rules and Procedures for Regional Forum.

I understand that, at the last meeting, Donna Darm distributed the most recent draft of the Regional Forum Rules and Procedures document, said Brown. Donna requested that any further comments be submitted to her, and said that, in the meantime, these are the Rules and Procedures we will use, at least for the time being. We can revisit this topic, if necessary, during the next agenda item, he said.

## VI. NMFS-Hosted Meeting Agenda -- July 23, Spokane.

We are no longer calling this an Executive Committee meeting, Brown explained -- we're now characterizing it as a NMFS-hosted meeting for information and discussion. The reason for the change is that NMFS is attempting to acknowledge concerns raised by the Tribes and the State of Montana about the Executive Committee as a forum. We feel that there are a number of important issues to be discussed, but this will not really be a decision meeting, Brown said. We want to encourage as many interests as possible from around the region to attend, and rather than push a governance issue, we prefer to characterize it as a meeting of executives for purposes of discussion, rather than as an Executive Committee meeting.

Basically, what we want to talk about is the PATH process and criteria for the 1999 decision, in an effort to ensure that everyone is at the same level of understanding about why we didn't make the decision in 1995, Brown said. We want to try to give people an understanding of the competing biological hypotheses about the reasons for the decline of salmon stocks in the Columbia River Basin, the uncertainties associated with those hypotheses and the information-gathering processes that are currently underway to answer some of those uncertainties, and to help us analyze the various recovery alternatives.

At the last meeting, a workgroup was formed to develop decision criteria for the 1999 decision process; this group has met twice since the last full IT meeting, Brown said. Ed Sheets, who has been facilitating those workgroup sessions, distributed Enclosure G, a "Draft Discussion Paper on a Process for Columbia River Basin Fish and Wildlife Restoration Decisions," dated July 9, 1997. (A revised draft was distributed on July 17, 1997 and is available from Kathy Ceballos.)

What I would really like to do today, Sheets began, is to brainstorm about how we're going to make the 1999 decision, as well as when we should make it. We can spend a few minutes going through (Enclosure G); if you have further comments on this document, please send them to me by July 14, said Sheets.

The thing that's driving this process is the fact that, in the next few years, the region is going to have to make a number of important decisions about the future of fish and wildlife management in the Columbia River Basin, Sheets continued. I'd like to talk today about what information the region will have to support a decision in 1999, as well as what it will and won't have if the decision is made in 1998. Before we get that far, however, we need to figure out the most useful process for making these decisions, who should make them, and what the scope of the decision should be -- are we talking about recovery and delisting of endangered Snake River chinook and sockeye salmon only? Or are we talking about some larger goal?

Sheets spent a few minutes going through the contents of Enclosure G, which included an introduction, as well as sections on who will make the decision, potential elements for a regional decisionmaking process, the scope and goals of the decision, the development of decision criteria, information needs, performance measures, the decision schedule, including implications of accelerating the decision schedule to March 1998, and next steps (please see Enclosure G for details of Sheets' presentation).

In response to a question from Arndt, Sheets said that this document was intended as a starting-point for discussions about the details of how the 1999 decision will be made -- it's a process

check, in other words -- are we headed in the right direction? he explained. What is the scope of that decision, and what is the process for making it? At the moment, all of the work plans are aimed at the goal of the delisting and recovery of the ESA stocks, Sheets said. However, there are parties in the region who would like the scope of the 1999 decision to be much larger -- one that addresses the needs of all salmon and steelhead stocks in the Columbia Basin, for example, or even all fish and wildlife throughout the Columbia Basin. If that's what the region's decisionmakers want to do, then we need to start rethinking our information-gathering needs.

Once we have agreement on the scope of the decision, the second question becomes, can we make a decision in 1998, vs. making a decision in 1999, said Sheets. We will then talk in some detail about what information will be available to support a decision in 1998, and how much more information we'll have to support a decision in 1999.

However, before we can enter into a discussion of the timing of the decision, and what information will be available in 1998 vs. 1999, we need to get everyone to the same level of understanding about what we're doing in terms of positioning ourselves to be able to make a decision in 1999, said Brown. Once everyone has the same understanding about which uncertainties we're trying to address, and what outstanding questions we're trying to get some additional information on, then we can talk about whether that process can be accelerated, and whether the questions people really want answers to are broader than the questions on which we're presently focused, Brown said.

I'm not sure I understand how the 1999 decision would be substantially different if the goal is to address the needs of all Columbia Basin fish and wildlife, all salmon and steelhead stocks, or recovery and delisting of the ESA stocks, said Cooney. The 1999 decision is basically about the Snake River Dams and John Day. The primary focus is on listed Snake River chinook and sockeye, but the decision has to be made in the context of all salmon and steelhead, especially given the likelihood of future listings. Effects on all fish and wildlife efforts have to be taken into account as well. If that's what we're saying, said Cooney, I think you should spell it out more clearly. On the other hand, if what you're implying is that decisions that effect all fish and wildlife may be different from the decisions that need to be made about the Snake River fish and projects, then you need to be clear about what those are.

You're right, said Sheets -- we're still talking about the same basic decisions: expanded barging, Drawdown of the four Lower Snake dams, or Drawdown of the Snake River projects plus John Day, and how they affect everything in the system. For example, said Brown, if you were to come to a place where the biological information was telling you that, for Snake River fish, taking out the four Lower Snake Dams and taking out the four Lower Snake projects plus John Day were equivalent, those two alternatives would certainly have different biological effects on other species.

And this briefing paper does touch on that, said Sheets. I also touch on the possibility that, if the focus is strictly on Snake River stocks, and the decision is made to remove the four Lower Snake dams, that could reduce the volume of water needed to move fish out of the Snake River system in the spring, which would then have an effect on fish migrating through the Columbia.

In response to a question from Arndt, Sheets pointed out that the PATH process will not address the impacts of this decision on resident fish and wildlife; also, the Corps is statutorily barred

right now from studying the capital costs of John Day Drawdown. There may be some other information gaps that need to be filled in as well, if the goal of this decision is to address the needs of all fish and wildlife in the Columbia Basin.

Nigro made the point that, for the meeting on July 23, the information needs for the various levels of the decision goal -- recovery and delisting of listed stocks, all Columbia Basin salmon and steelhead and all Columbia Basin fish and wildlife -- need to be clearly articulated. As we move up this pyramid, he said, what additional information will we need? It may be that recovery and delisting is the driver for the 1999 decision, Nigro said. However, you can't make that decision outside the context of the other two goals. The question is, how do you capture those other two goals? While PATH may not explicitly have a plan to analyze the effects of this decision on resident fish, for example, there are ongoing research projects and existing databases that will allow the region to analyze those effects. I'd like to be sure that we include some sort of a structured conversation in our presentation on the 23rd.

Obviously this is an extremely complex subject, said Arndt, and I'm concerned that, if we get too deeply into these governance issues, we're going to lose our audience before we even get to our original charge, laying out the feasibility of making the decision in 1998 rather than 1999. One way to simplify this, he said, is simply to say that, if it is decided that John Day Drawdown has to be part of the mix, then you're not going to make the decision in 1998, and you're probably not going to make it in 1999.

Sheets continued on through his document, touching on the output of planned PATH and economic analyses by 1999, the implications of accelerating the decision schedule to March 1998, the possibility of accelerating the economic analysis, and the possibility of delaying the decision until 2001 to include the impacts of John Day Drawdown (see pages 8-9 of Enclosure G for details). If anyone has further comments on this document, again, please provide them to me by this Monday, said Sheets.

With that, Sheets yielded the floor to PATH facilitator Dave Marmorek, who stated his intention to talk, first, about how to make the 1999 decision, and, second, when that decision could be made. I'm going to briefly recap the approach currently proposed in PATH, then talk about the implications of an accelerated decision schedule, he said.

Marmorek put up a series of overheads, reproduced in Enclosure H. He spent a few minutes describing the PATH process itself, its analytical methodology and work products. Marmorek explained that there is common agreement within the PATH membership that both upstream (Snake River) and downstream salmon stocks are affected by ocean and climate conditions. The key uncertainties underlying this assumption are expressed in a pair of alternative hypotheses. Hypothesis A states that differences in overall survival (post-1975) between these groups is largely due to the hydrosystem, implying delayed mortality due to passage through the hydrosystem, as well as direct mortality. Hypothesis B suggests that differences in overall survival (post-1975) between those groups is largely due to differential ocean distribution and survival -- that the historic range of upstream stocks takes them to areas in the ocean where survival conditions are worse than they are in areas frequented by downstream stocks, in other words.

Marmorek provided a detailed explanation of the various types and levels of analysis that PATH

will provide on the various stocks of concern -- seven Snake River stocks, seven Lower Columbia stocks and two Mid-Columbia/Upper Columbia stocks. As far as our eventual work products go, he said, in terms of the level of information provided, you might think of the spring/summer chinook analysis as a Cadillac, the fall chinook analysis as a Volkswagen, and the steelhead analysis as a bicycle.

Taking the alternative hypotheses and other uncertainties, PATH will generate what are called primary performance measures for all of the alternative hypotheses and other uncertainties. These primary performance measures include the numbers of spawners and recruits per spawner by year for each stock, as well as harvest by year. The hypothetical graph on page 5 of Enclosure H shows how this information might be represented in graphical form.

The analysis will also develop secondary performance measures for each stock: the probability that the number of spawners will be above the survival threshold for 24 and 100 years; the probability that the number of spawners will be above the recovery threshold for the next 24 and 48 years; a comparison of those future probabilities with the historical probabilities (how well these stocks would have done given their survivals in the pre-1976 period); an analysis of the distribution of spawners across stocks (representing diverse life histories). The graph on page 7 of Enclosure H shows how this information might be represented in graphical form.

Marmorek then spent a few minutes describing the next step in the PATH analytical process, which is to rank actions with respect to alternative performance measures according to selected decision criteria (see page 2 of Enclosure H). The graph on page 8 of Enclosure H shows how this analysis might be displayed in graphical form.

Page 10 of Enclosure H shows an example of the kind of decision matrix PATH will ultimately produce, integrating the various hypotheses about the reason for the stocks' decline (hydro-related vs. differential ocean survival) with various decision criteria (maximize potential survival of weakest stock, maximize potential recovery of weakest stock, maximize aggregate harvest, maximize life-history diversity) and the various action alternatives (Snake River Drawdown, John Day Drawdown, improved transportation). What this shows, obviously, is that our recovery actions will be different depending on which of the biological hypothesis is true, and which decision criteria define the management goal, Marmorek said. The intent of this matrix is to show you the way in which PATH intends to synthesize this information.

The group spent a few minutes discussing the validity, or "robustness," of the analyses the PATH process will ultimately produce, in the context of the 1999 decision; eventually, Arndt summarized this discussion by saying that, not only is PATH trying to reduce the existing uncertainty, it is attempting to manage, in a quantitative way, the uncertainty that cannot be eliminated. In other words, we can't make all of the uncertainty go away, he said, but we can assess the risks associated with particular decisions and management strategies in a quantitative way.

The group provided a number of suggestions about ways Marmorek could clarify and focus his presentation to the executives on July 23, such as a need to clearly explain the competing biological hypotheses, and to provide an understandable historical context.

Marmorek spent a few minutes describing the current PATH analytical approach (page 12 of Enclosure H), the output of planned PATH analyses by 1999 (page 13), approaches for accelerating PATH analyses (page 14-15), including answers to the following key questions:

- ? What information do we have now that we didn't have in 1995 that could reduce some uncertainties in the 1995 modeling results?
- ? What information will become available to reduce uncertainties; when will this information become available?
- ? How much will the new information reduce uncertainty?

Marmorek's document also articulated the current schedule of PATH analyses (page 16) and the implications of an accelerated decision schedule for PATH analyses (page 17).

Based on all of these factors, said Marmorek, PATH still thinks that its original schedule is the most appropriate. Under this schedule, PATH will produce a draft decision analysis for spring/summer chinook by the fall of 1997, a draft decision analysis for fall chinook by the spring of 1998, a final decision analysis integrating spring/summer and fall chinook and steelhead by October 1998.

The group discussed the implications of delaying the 1999 decision until 2001, ultimately concluding that, while such a delay would yield additional data points, the question of whether or not that data would be critical to the ultimate decision is an open one, and the likelihood that the additional data obtained would outweigh the potential biological and political ramifications of delay is low.

The other main item we wanted to cover at the July 23 meeting, in addition to the 1999 decision and how to make it, was the governance issue, said Brown. As most of you are aware, there is another process going on, which some in the region have been calling the Three Sovereigns process. In addition to that, we should probably talk about potential improvements in the Regional Forum process.

The Three Sovereigns met on June 3, said Sheets -- the governors of the four western states, Katy McGinty, chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, and Tribal chairs from many of the 13 Columbia Basin Indian Tribes. One of the outcomes of that meeting was the expression of a shared concern that we aren't making enough progress on Columbia Basin fish and wildlife restoration, and that the current governance process needs to be improved. The participants in the June 3 meeting directed their staffs to get together and come up with some suggestions about what to do next, said Sheets.

In response to that direction, there was a staff meeting of the Three Sovereigns on June 23, which yielded a commitment to form some working groups -- one to look at governance, another to look at stranded cost options, another to look at future fish and wildlife costs, another to track what is happening with other processes, such as the BPA subscription process and the process to separate BPA's transmission operations from its generation operations, Sheets continued. Those subgroups are compiling information and identifying alternatives, with the goal of reporting back to the full group at a meeting that has tentatively been scheduled for early August.

The group working on governance is looking at a variety of alternatives, said Sheets. Those alternatives involve possible new legislation, and changing the composition, responsibilities and

authorities of the current Northwest Power Planning Council. They are also exploring non-legislative alternatives -- ways to improve the current system. Those discussions are obviously ongoing, he said, and we'll get future updates as more progress is made. In response to a question, Sheets said the governance group currently includes Ken Casavant of the Council, Howard Funke of the Spokane/Coeur d'Alene Tribes, Will Stelle of NMFS and several others.

At the same time, without in any way trying to compromise or undermine the efforts of the Three Sovereigns, NMFS is interested in exploring any improvements that can be made near-term to the current governance process to address some of the issues raised by the Tribes, the State of Montana and others, said Sheets. In terms of the meeting on July 23, I think what we envision is an informal conversation to update people on what's happening with the Three Sovereigns process, and to explore some ideas about how to improve the governance process in the interim. One of the ideas people are very interested in discussing further is whether we can make some progress on dispute resolution; another is whether or not it makes sense to bring an independent facilitator on board, Sheets said.

## VII. Technical Management Team Facilitator.

We discussed this at the last IT meeting, said Brown; as Ed said, one of the options people are interested in exploring is the use of an independent facilitator, not just for the Technical Management Team, but for the Implementation Team and the Executive Committee as well. For the Technical Management Team, we're obviously well into the in-season management period for 1997, and from my perspective, at least, it's probably going to be difficult to try to introduce a facilitator for that process this year. However, I wanted to check that with the other IT members before concluding that it's too late to bring a TMT facilitator on board in 1997.

I guess I would ask what's standing in the way of putting a facilitator in place this year, said Nigro. After reviewing the notes from the last IT meeting, it was unclear to me where we were going to go with this issue next, said Brown -- I know, however, that the Corps has expressed some concerns about the idea of a TMT facilitator.

Our General has expressed extreme concern about what this really is and means, particularly the focus on TMT, said Arndt. He would be much more comfortable discussing this in the broader context of facilitation for the Regional Forum in general. His primary concern is the fact that the TMT is a real-time management body -- General Griffin does not want to dilute the ability of the TMT participants to make those real-time decisions.

How would the Corps not chairing TMT dilute that real-time decision-making ability? asked Nigro. I'm not really in a position to debate the specifics of the General's views on this subject, said Arndt, but I think he is concerned about the potential for delaying decisions and making the process more lengthy, particularly in the case of flood control decisions. He is concerned that facilitation would slow the process down, in other words. But facilitation, by definition, is used to improve communication, not to muddy the waters, said Nigro. Speaking for Doug Arndt only, I think there is a very strong concern that that type of facilitation is not what's being sought for the TMT, said Arndt.

How does the scope of work developed by TMT fall short of creating a facilitation that meets the needs expressed by the participants in this forum? asked Nigro. Are the Corps' objections based on a review of this scope of work, or are you saying that TMT facilitation is simply off the table? I think facilitation is off the table for this year, until it has been discussed in a broader context, replied Arndt. This is not an indictment of facilitation -- I'm trying to be open and honest here, Arndt said, and I think the concern is that what is being sought for TMT is not facilitation.

To put it somewhat differently, said Brown, it sounds as though General Griffin does not believe that lack of facilitation is the problem at TMT, and is reluctant to endorse a fix that is not directed at the real problem -- in his view, the dissatisfaction of some TMT participants with the decisions that are coming out of that process. I think that's true, said Arndt.

I don't think there's any mystery about why we feel facilitation is critical for the TMT, said Cooney -- it's because decisions have to be made, week in and week out, within a very narrow time-frame. That tight schedule makes it even more important that everyone's point of view be clearly understood and efficiently discussed.

Speaking for myself, I think facilitation would help, said Brown. However, given the level of disagreement about what we're going to do, and how we're going to do it, it is unlikely that we can get a facilitator on board and up to speed in time to effectively referee during TMT's summer management period this year.

I'm not particularly satisfied with that, said Nigro, and I guess what I would like to see is a written explanation of the objections to this proposal. We can't respond to innuendo, and to charges that things aren't what they seem to be, in terms of our motives for seeking facilitation. If the Corps believes there is another problem here, which this proposal is aimed at solving, then I would like to know what they perceive that problem to be.

I guess what I would propose is that we go around the table, to see whether other IT members have specific views on this issue, said Brown. Are there other comments on the scope of work that was distributed at the last meeting? I think there is definitely merit in looking at facilitation at every level of the Regional Forum, said Jim Yost of Idaho, but in terms of trying to get a TMT facilitator in place for this year, I support the Corps' position -- let's put it out on the table in the context of modifications and improvements to the Regional Forum process as a whole.

Washington still feels very strongly that we should move forward with this, said Tom Cooney -- the intent certainly is not to obfuscate any decision that has to be made; we fully recognize that the TMT is organized around a decisionmaking schedule that has to be met. I still think the best way to go is to get a facilitator in place who doesn't have a particular interest in the outcome of the decisionmaking process, and who has the skills to encourage the various TMT participants to listen to one another. I think it would be best to get that person on board as soon as possible, so that he or she could learn from their experience during the 1997 summer management period and better facilitate the development of the 1998 Water Management Plan, which is the next major task facing the TMT. I should add that Washington doesn't have any concerns about the scope of work developed by the TMT, Cooney said.

I do have a concern, said Alan Ruger of BPA, and that is, I think there is a perception, held by a lot of people in the region, that there is something wrong with the process in general. For that



reason, I think it would be most helpful to address the TMT facilitator issue in the context of that overall problem. If we jump in and try to fix TMT before those discussions take place, I think that may confound our solution down the road.

There is agreement among the federal agencies that one way to improve this entire process would be to use facilitation at the executive level, the senior management level, and, as needed, at the technical committee level, said Brown. From the perspective of the Corps, the concern about interfering with the TMT's ability to make timely decisions has not been addressed, and they want to stop there. I think the notes should show that there were no specific concerns raised at this meeting about the scope of work as proposed, he said, and that at least some of the IT members feel very strongly that we should proceed with this. If we are not going to do that, then, in accordance with our rules and procedures, we owe the process a written explanation, which I will produce.

So the decision, then, is not to proceed with finding a TMT facilitator in 1997? asked Nigro. I think that will be the decision, yes, replied Brown. Can you provide your explanation prior to the July 23 meeting, in case we choose to raise this subject during the governance discussion? asked Nigro. I'll note that as your preference, replied Brown.

#### VIII. Approval of minutes from June 5 IT Meeting.

No changes were made to the June IT minutes at today's meeting.

#### IX. Next IT Meeting Date and Agenda Items.

The next meeting of the Implementation Team was set for Thursday, August 7, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the fifth-floor conference room of NMFS's Portland offices. Meeting notes prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA Contractor.

Final Notes